

NOAA Research Council

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The NOAA Research Council performs corporate oversight of NOAA research and development.

Membership

The Research Council consists of the Chief Scientists of each of the line offices, or line office designee, and a representative of the Office of Program Planning and Integration. A representative from the Office of Finance and Administration will service as an ex-officio member*. The Chair of the Council will be from the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Formulates and recommends scientific policy to the Under Secretary/Administrator and provides guidance to NOAA Line and Program Offices on scientific and technological issues;
- oversees a continual process of independent peer evaluation to determine the quality and relevance of NOAA's science and technology programs, products, services, and professional staff, and recommends where and how improvements should be made;
- establishes criteria and develops a review process for reviews of all research and development programs. Reviews would be conducted by the Research Council using NOAA Science Advisory Board (SAB) mechanisms;
- ensures all NOAA services are based on sound science, NOAA research programs are designed to improve existing NOAA services or establish the basis for needed new services; and NOAA's research laboratories are meeting the agency's mission goals;
- fosters sound research strategies and scientific program development within NOAA to meet long-range societal needs and emerging scientific and technological opportunities.
- ensures NOAA's research investment follows best practices and is applied consistently across NOAA following OMB criteria, for example:
 - review the NOAA SAB charter and recommend changes;
 - work with the NOAA SAB to support science and research activities of the agency. In addition to its current responsibilities, the SAB would advise the NOAA Research Council;
 - ensures research is directed to operations and operations are receptive to research. This programmatic and strategic balance should also be reflected in the budget process; and
 - reports to the NOAA Executive Council
- promotes and emphasizes Federal Geographic Data Consortium compliant metadata for all research projects and grants
- promotes and emphasizes data archive

Decision Making Process:

The Research Council will meet about four times per year, with occasional meetings called by the Chair. Each meeting will last 1-2 days. Decision-making meetings require a majority of Council members to be present and will be held in the Washington DC/Silver Spring, MD area. Teleconferencing and videoconferencing will be utilized as necessary.

The Council, with the support of Council staff and line and program offices, will collect and analyze information to support its recommendations and its oversight responsibilities.

Decisions will be accomplished by informed consensus. The Chair will strive for consensus on every issue, but because the chair maintains 51% of the vote, the final decision is made by the Chair when consensus is not achieved.

The Research Council will report to the NOAA Executive Council (NEC) The NEC will oversee the Agency's Research and Development investment (budget) in directed and exploratory research, regardless of how the funds are appropriated or where the funds are spent.

Charter

The Research Council is responsible for corporate level oversight of NOAA research regardless of the manner in which research is conducted.

The Research Council formulates and recommends scientific policy to the Under Secretary/Administrator, and provides guidance to NOAA Line and Staff offices on scientific and technological issues.

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*The NFA member has not been considered ex-officio by the Research Council to the present.